

UNCLASSIFIED

9:53 AM Monday, September 12, 1988

NOTE TO: Interested Parties

SUBJECT: Conversational Queries for Chautauqua

Politburo glasnost': Are Politburo members more open about policy details on which they disagree? If so, do you think they have specifically decided to do this, or is it because their disagreements are becoming sharper? Are Soviet editors more willing to print letters containing sharp questions addressed to the Politburo? For example, one letter asks why the Politburo recommended the terminally ill Chernenko for General Secretary. By the way, in your opinion what is the answer to that reader's question?

Politburo "balance": Is it good, or is it bad to have such a wide difference in political attitudes within the Politburo--between Yakovlev and Ligachev, for example? Doesn't it encourage lower-level officials to differ in their interpretations of party decisions?

Ligachev: What do you think he meant when he said a large group of obkom first secretaries helped Gorbachev to become General Secretary in March 1985? And what is his attitude toward agricultural leasing? He seems to be both for it and against it.

Need for "strong hand": We saw differing opinions expressed on this matter at the 19th Conference. Do you think many members of the Central Committee are becoming impatient with Gorbachev, and would prefer that reforms be implemented using "command" methods? How many Central Committee members do you think really would prefer that Ligachev were the General Secretary? Is the number growing or diminishing?

Political restructuring: When the new structure is in place, how will it affect Politburo members? What will be the relationship among Gorbachev, Ligachev, Gromyko, and Ryzhkov? Do you really believe it will lead to redistributing power from the party committees to the soviets, or will party first secretaries continue to dominate as before? Will the election reform really work in the party organizations, or do you think members of party committees will continue to vote as they believe their leaders wish them to?

Korotich on Ukraine: What did you mean in your interview with La Vanguardia about the situation in the Ukraine? Do you really believe "civil war" would result if the regime tried to clean up corruption there? Shcherbitskiy gives the appearance of really attempting to carry out restructuring. Is this a false impression?

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September 9, 1988

1. When was your public commission formed? How active is it? Does it have subcommittees that meet? If so, how often? Is your committee still receiving many letters or visits from individuals complaining about human rights problems in their own specific circumstances? If so, how many individuals do you receive? Does your Committee review the cases? What goals were accomplished when your commission met with Amnesty International in May 1988? Will the Commission meet while you are in the United States at the Woodrow Wilson Center?
2. Did you have any trouble convincing Literaturnaya gazeta to publish your 15 June 1988 article proposing a presidential system of government? Did you discuss this idea with Gorbachev or any other members of the leadership? What were Politburo reactions to the proposals for political reform made at the Party Conference?
3. Why didn't you attend the Party Conference as a delegate?
4. You have recently proposed the release of all religious prisoners. How many are there? Will this proposal go the Central Committee for study? Who at the Central Committee or Secretariat level acts as liaison to you or to your public commission?
5. How do you interpret the August 1988 Supreme Soviet decree regulating demonstrators? Will local officials be able to stifle legitimate demonstrations by citing the proviso that lets them take into account local laws and conditions?
6. Where does criminal law reform stand? What is holding it up? When will drafts come out for public discussion on the fundamentals of criminal law and the RSFSR codes of criminal law and criminal procedure? What positions have been taken by the various parties debating the draft? What are the chances for changing or abolishing Articles 70, 190, 142, and 227? What will they look like when the new code comes out? Will the new law code address the rights of informal groups?
7. What is the progress on drafting other new laws, such as those on glasnost, the media, private publishing, independence of the courts, religion, and state security? What issues are most controversial? Are any specific people or organizations holding things up?
8. What is your attitude--or that of the Soviet regime--toward Israeli efforts to institute a plan for direct flights for Soviet Jews? Does the Soviet regime or the Public Commission have any view on Soviet Jews' freedom of choice to emigrate wherever they want?
9. Is a decision made at an all-Union level as to how many Soviets will be allowed to emigrate per year? Is there an annual break-down for Soviet Jews, Armenians, or Germans? If an all-Union decision is made, how is it communicated to the local OVIRs?
10. What is the evidence that local offices of OVIR sometimes thwart instructions from central authorities (like MFA) in Moscow on individual refusenik cases? Has OVIR come under any pressure from the top leadership or the MFA to be more responsive? What is the background to the flipflops OVIR made early this year regarding a strict interpretation of the first-degree relative rule?

11. Soviet officials several times have indicated that knowledge of state secrets would be the only reason for denial of permission to emigrate, but the problem still persists of "poor relatives"--i.e., applicants whose relatives refuse to sign papers saying that the applicant has no unmet financial responsibilities. Is any progress on this issue forthcoming?

12. In January 1988 the regime announced new regulations for increasing the rights of patients in psychiatric institutions. To what extent are the regulations being respected? Are psychiatric workers able to frustrate the new regulations by simply ignoring them? Are local party officials exerting pressure on psychiatrists to ignore the regulations when it suits their purposes--e.g., to lock up troublesome whistle-blowers? To what extent have all psychiatric hospitals made the shift from coming under the Interior Ministry to the Health Ministry?

13. With regard to informal groups, have there been any regulations on how to register them? Are local authorities responsible for registration in their own city, or is registration done on an all-Union basis? How do groups go about obtaining a meeting place? What is the progress of the draft law on voluntary societies? How will it affect informal groups?

14. Has the regime had any success in coopting and bringing under control the informal groups? With the Komsomol's apparent inability to attract any of these groups, what alternate strategy does the regime hope to use?

15. What is the situation concerning Sergei Grigoryants, publisher of the journal Glasnost? Under what legal grounds did the police confiscate his printing equipment and archival material in May?

16. What are your feelings about the progress of the Vienna CSCE meeting? What, in your view, has accounted for the slowness in negotiating a final document? How strongly do you think the leadership is about holding a follow-up human rights conference in Moscow?

17. Is Andrei Sakharov allowed to travel overseas? Is Moscow afraid he won't return if given permission to travel?

18. Have any citizens used the new law giving them the right to sue officials to challenge psychiatric commitment decisions? What other kinds of issues have been raised? How many or what percentage have won their cases? Is the KGB exempt from this law? If so, why?



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An Executive Summary

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